

857 of *lepara* (*Mariscus* sp.) or *lejekjike* (*Cyperus immensus*), rush-grasses which the ants seize with their antennae. The girls who have been stamping now set out with some friends from a neighbouring village, all armed [54] with axes, to collect firewood. The girls of this company are age-mates; they share their labours, confide their love affairs, bathe together, and, in [532] the late afternoon, when they go to the bush, they sit together elongating their *labia minora* (*hu hucna*). Meanwhile the village lies banking and dreaming in the afternoon sun; except for the pecking fowls there is hardly a stir. 'Cu gae' ('Where is it—beer'), says Raselaka to his son Sekware, he returns with some poles on his shoulder for repairing his

● 574 wife's granary. 'There is beer of *lejema* [work-party] over at Mudziri's,' 273 is the reply; and the men, accompanied by the visitors, set out for the beer drink, knowing they will be allowed to partake even though they have done no work.

The hum of voices as you near a certain kraal leaves you in no doubt that this must be Mudziri's village. A fair crowd has gathered in the courtyard of the woman who is holding the *lejema* and a typical beer-drinking scene meets the eye. The centre of the picture is a large pot of beer placed in a rounded depression made for it in the courtyard. Beside it stands a flat winnowing basket containing long-handled calabash cups from which the beer is drunk. Beside the pot sits a man who serves the beer, using a beer-cup as ladle; he gives each cup to a young man of about twenty, who hands it round. The guests have ranged themselves on either side of the beer pot, women on one side, men on the other. As each calabash is emptied, it is brought back by the young man who is doing the waiting, to be filled. There is no hurry. Each one drinks at his leisure and conversation flows freely. Every one knows he will be given in his turn and, if one man is handed a second cup, he will pass it on to any one who has not yet been served, till all have had four or five. It is a pleasant social gathering and all the latest gossip is discussed. Small children toddle about in between the drinkers and may even be given a little of the beer. Ominously Pheduli remarks, 'Madume has seen police 651 near Medingen. There appear to be four of them. What can they be 625 wanting?' 'Oh,' replies Dwagu, 'they are no doubt raiding for tax defaulters!' There is general uneasiness, for about a fifth of the gathering are in arrears. Muhale is six years in arrears and, as he never goes to town to work, he has not once been caught. 'They won't catch me napping in my home to-night,' volunteers Mathakha. 'I shall go into the bush again. Are they Shangana-Tonga or Sotho, those police Madume saw?' a very relevant question, because the Shangana-Tonga, more likely than not recruited from outside the reserve, will not know these hiding places in the forests and caves. Here Pitika describes how his friend Setimela, who had himself always been in default and knew all the best hiding places, had joined the police the previous year. Consequently, at the very next raid the police made a most successful accop, catching ninety-six defaulters, whom they marched to Duivelakloof.

574 The beer-pot is almost empty and people are merely sitting talking 273 when the host calls Raselaka and his European guest aside into his reception hut, together with a few other intimates. A woman brings in a small

A PICTURE OF EVERYDAY THINGS

27

pot of beer, decorated in a red chevron pattern, brimming with shining white bubbles at the mouth. A well-scurved basket with four beer-cups is placed beside it. The woman crawls on her knees in the presence of the guests, as is the custom. Turning to his neighbour, the host says, 'Here is a little water in honour of my good friend, headman Raselaka, and his visitor.' The man, turning to his neighbour, says, 'You heard the words of your host?' and he in turn repeats the message to Raselaka himself, who returns thanks for the honour. His thanks are similarly repeated (*hu noma*) till they reach the host, and the dishing-up begins. The host is given the first cup to drink, in accordance with Native etiquette, then Raselaka and his friend are served, the European, as an honour, being given a rounded calabash placed in a small flat basket. The group in the hut is small, so no waiter is needed. Two women form part of the select company. When the beer has sunk to the last drops, the server says, 'The beer is finished,' whereupon all present *loka* (greet) with a long-drawn-out 'Ndooooonnnnn.' The pot is turned upside down and emptied of the drops, which are drunk by some one in the company. Such are the formalities of beer-drinking.

The sun has sunk low in the western horizon when you wend your way back to the village. The herdboys, with whistles and cries, are bringing home the cattle, goats, and donkeys. Two of them, one on an ox, one on a donkey, are having a race on the last level piece of ground near home. Others carry bundles of wood under their arms for the *Akara* fire. Suddenly you hear the ululations of beer carriers as a party of ten women carrying calabashes, resting in baskets half-filled with grain, comes towards you. What beer is this? Are these not the in-laws of Pkela, who lives in the village next to yours? True enough, they are bringing *Akara* beer to their *tsai* (bridegroom), who married their daughter. When the women in the village see them, they, too, begin their cries of joy, accompanied by a few dancing steps (*hu pchela*); one of them even relieves a carrier of her burden and carries it for her to the hut of the son-in-law. Having set down their pots, the carriers begin dancing about, singing, 'Mushiji *Ahi le*; gi y's *shava ga noma*' (I don't eat blackjacks; I'm going to have relish of meat), in anticipation of the goat that the receiver is by custom bound to kill for them on such an occasion. He has in addition to give them a goat and 10s. to take back in recognition of their gift. If he has no goat, he may give them £1 in all instead. Hence the beer which the relatives of a woman send to their son-in-law each year or every few years, when they are short of corn, is really an exchange of gifts to maintain good relations. In addition, when the in-laws need anything, such as cattle or food, they may make beer and ask their *tsai*, who cannot easily refuse. Immediately after their arrival, the carriers are given a pot of beer from that which they have brought. But, since your capacity for beer is more limited than that of your host, you decide you must go back to the village, as it is getting late.

Every one is converging homewards. Some women are coming with paraffin tins or pots of water on their heads; these four-gallon tins are much liked for their lightness, but the dampness of the climate soon rusts holes into them. Those coming from the fields bring with them baskets

4.76 calculation, no supervision. The adjustments in the situation rely upon
 5.71 no pre-organisation; there is practically no leadership or direction; and
 4.61 yet an effective interaction is attained. The total pattern is a part of the
 social system; it is not as if two or more people have casually encountered
 one another and have by trial and error to discover how to co-operate
 effectively in performing the task. Christians, whose standards of organ-
 [194] isation, performance, and efficiency are derived from those of the white
 man, attempt to submit the workers to discipline. They sometimes
 constitute themselves as foremen, they attempt to apply the available
 energy systematically, they have a system of rewards and penalties. The
 result is, not co-operation, but service; there are few, if any, songs and
 the occasion is no longer a gala social event.

The workers at a *lejeme* usually adjourn after one and a half or two
 hours to refresh themselves at about 11 a.m., when a pot of beer, euphe-
 mistically called 'the knife-sharpener', is brought to the field. The
 interval is of indefinite duration and is so much out of harmony with
 modern ideas, that 'the knife-sharpener' is often regarded with dis-
 favour; instead of sharpening, it blunts the edge of activity in the modern
 situation, in which the *lejeme*-giver thinks of himself as an employer and
 the workers are concerned to avoid being exploited. Neither employer
 nor employee is equipped by his background of culture and training to
 achieve success in these new roles; and the result is that tensions arise.
 Fortunately, however, the *lejeme* is still overwhelmingly a collective
 social event. There is as yet no need to busy up labour with dignity and
 moral worth; it is sufficient to submerge it in the sociability of beer. For
 the real nature of the *lejeme* appears when the workers go to the home of
 the *lejeme*-giver. The situation there instantly dispels any preconception
 • [574] we may have of special rewards for the workers. There are visitors,
 dubbed *vakobedi* (solicitors) and as such are distinguished from the
vakwani (workers). In our society they would be called 'gate-crashers' or
 'beggars', but they are not in needy circumstances and do not ask for
 favours; they are entitled to join in. Individually they not only imbibes
 calabash for calabash with the workers, but far outnumber them, not
 unusually by as much as four or five to one.

[735] To judge the situation correctly, we must remember that begging, one
 of the traits of the Lovedu we might regard as most irritating, is not
 socially disapproved. He who has and does not give is the offender, not
 he who asks for what he needs. The case is different, however, when the
 beggar is a loafer and sponger, roaming about in search of beer without
 doing any work; and if, as is not unlikely, he is disliked, his presence
 during the exhilaration caused by the beer is liable to cause a breach of
 the peace and he might be turned away. Generally speaking, *vakwani*
 are not given special beer; the beer is not a reward for their services, but
 a feast transforming work into recreation and reflecting the emphasis
 upon liberality. To-day the *vakobedi* are sometimes looked upon as
 parasitic beggars, and measures are taken to reconstitute the *lejeme* so
 as to make it a more economical method of co-operation. Fundamentally,
 all the arduous work is still done by *lejeme*, though every one knows that,
 for, say, 4s. worth of salt, more workers could be obtained and better

431 some day reciprocate and the old man again 'thanks' him with beer given in his honour. And this is an essential aspect of these gift exchanges. The most striking illustration is in respect of *manywale* (bride-price). The *toti*, it is said, never completes *manywale* payments (*manywale* is a *file*); even in his old age he must still respond to the call for assistance from his relatives-in-law; and they in turn never cease bringing him beer. But whatever he gives falls into the *manywale* and must be returned should the marriage be dissolved; the chain linking the parties into relations of reciprocity has snapped.

574- The *goko*, essentially a dance performed by the young men of one or more areas, provides the setting of an interesting interchange of goodwill and of commodities. The main object is undoubtedly recreational, and the main participants are not kin, but members of a territorial unit. The district head is not necessarily involved, except so far as he must know what goes on in his district. The old Lovedu word *habe*, a musical entertainment, emphasises its salient features: youths, blowing on reed flutes, dance round in a circle to the accompaniment of four drums beaten by girls. There is much preliminary practising under the leadership of the dance-master (*malagwase*), but in the actual performances leadership is not marked and changes continually as one performer after the other takes his stand in the centre of the ring of dancers. The artistic aspect, the making of the sets of reeds, their tone compass, the rhythmic counterpoints and the various melodic and harmonic sequences of sound may be dismissed in a sentence: close by, one is reminded of the pealing of bells thrown into ever new combinations by complex steps and movements; at a distance one listens as if to an ensemble of brass instruments strongly supported by drums. We are concerned with the socio-economic aspects only.

171 A slight comparison with the Venda *matangwa*, a word also used by the Lovedu (*matangwa*), is instructive. A Venda creditor wishing to collect a debt calls the dancers, gives them some work (such as the building of a hut or the repairing of a fence), and sends them to the recalcitrant debtor. There they stay feasting at the expense of the debtor and of his neighbours until the debtor pays. But the beast that the debtor pays is slaughtered and consumed by the performers, the creditor receiving only a small part. Apart from using the *matangwa* to enforce payment by debtors, the Venda also send such dancers to express sympathy when there has been a death and in that case there is a return visit to get back the beast slaughtered. It has also other uses not relevant to our present purpose.

574- Among the Lovedu the *goko* is somewhat different. Private individuals send it to friends or relatives to express sympathy or to notify a death as well as to celebrate the occasion of the latter's marriage or setting up a new home; and there are special rules for each kind of *goko*. The *goko* of condolence, for instance, lasts one day, drums are not allowed if the deceased is of a foreign tribe, and refusal of the entertainment is impossible. Generally speaking, a *goko* entails special food and lodging arrangements, food for the visitors being collected from households in the district which also provides sleeping quarters. The old rules designed

CO-OPERATION AND EXCHANGE

63

to prevent promiscuity among young boys and girls are no longer in evidence, and complications are liable to arise where there is a *gshu*. The economic aspect of the *gshu*, except where it originates in a visit of condolence or is sent to supplicate for rain, is that the host, whether he himself originally invited the dancers or not, may send back a 'revenge' *gshu* to get back the beast he killed for the performers. He gets back very little, only the *musumo*, perhaps a leg of the beast, and the performers do not work for him to compensate him for what they have eaten. The *gshu* is not conceived of as a debt-collecting institution, it never originates in a debt, and once it is set into motion, its real function is to maintain reciprocal relations. A man may start the chain of reciprocity by inviting a *gshu* from elsewhere; on the other hand, a party of dancers out for merriment sometimes descend upon any one they like, but he may refuse the entertainment as too costly or for other reasons. To notify the host that a *gshu* is coming is usual; but a man whose *gshu* has been accepted by another may stop (*ku thosa*) the letter from returning the compliment (and getting back his beast) by sending *khirula* beer; he will do so, for instance, when he has no beast to kill or is reluctant to part with one.

The *gshu* may be a cumbrous instrument to effect exchanges of commodities, but it throws the social concomitants of these exchanges boldly into relief, magnifying them to such an extent that the gift exchange is completely obscured. This is in accordance with Lovedu exceptions, for they have a great dislike of anything that is clearly and primarily a commercial transaction. The *gshu* stresses the interchange of goodwill; the guests, drawn perhaps from three or four areas, come to display their skill for the delectation of their hosts; and the latter, hurriedly collecting their dancers, come forth with their drummers and ensemble of flute-players to challenge their guests. First the one party, then the next give their performances; it is a social gala occasion and the competition is carried on in the friendliest spirit. The spectators are the judges: an old man passing gives his verdict, perhaps after having heard only one set of performers; an old woman, after a dance of ecstasy (*ku gshela*), sets the crown, be it merely a leg-ring or necklace, upon the head of her favourite performer; and when the next party dances, the verdicts are reversed and the honours paid anew. In the end neither party is victor or vanquished. The object has been self-expression, without stress upon individual performance, and entertainment in which the competitive element is present merely to heighten the enjoyment. The boys and girls of the competing areas intermingle and there are many lovers' intrigues; the girls give their favourites cloths to wear as if they were knights; it is truly an occasion for the renewal of the ties of friendship, ties between relatives and ties between districts. The reciprocity is generally at long range, for distant districts are brought into relationship. Resting upon a relationship between two individuals, it draws into its sphere, through the dancing, food, and sleeping arrangements, whole territorial units.

The most impressive of all the gift exchanges, however, involves the two groups of people between whom, by reason of a marriage, brides are exchanged against cattle (*musywalo*). This exchange is as far

181 is complete without beer. During some seasons of the year, people are
 273 in a perpetual state of exhilaration: some are singing or gossiping near
 the beer pots; some are expectantly watching their concoctions mature;
 and the rest are recovering from the last beer drink. Drunkenness is
 deprecated, but drink induces a state in which behaviour otherwise
 frowned upon is tolerantly regarded. Beer parties should be orderly,
 for they are occasions when some of the restraints of life may be relaxed
 and when jealousies and dissensions, normally under control, may rise
 to the surface. Though ostentation, even self-praise, is allowed in
 states of exhilaration, beer must be drunk with decorum; it should be
 lingered over, not bolted in haste.

181 A multitude of values centre round beer. It is a nourishing food, taking
 273 the place of meat feasts elsewhere; it is also the food of the gods. Beer is so
 574 great an attraction that it would be sheer lack of balance to keep one's
 appointments, to attend to other business, or to be worried by the passage
 of time if a beer party is imminent or in progress. A man's reputation for
 generosity depends upon his giving a beer party occasionally, although
 the entertainment is invariably in connexion with some definite purpose,
 economic, ritual, or religious. Beer is the medium of goodwill exchanges
 between relatives-in-law and between neighbours; and, as belonging to
 this context, the tributary beer from the districts to the queen is trans-
 formed from a burden to a pleasure. Beer is at the basis of the group of
 [57] *maljona* (literally, those who eat together), composed largely of kin and
 neighbours who often co-operate in economic activities; this group cuts
 across the lines of the district and includes even such alien elements as
 Shagana-Tonga; and the main obligation of its members is to call fellow
 members to any beer that is available. Reconciliations are effected by
 beer, which also 'opens the way for the mother-in-law'. All the essential
 reciprocities are maintained by beer: a man returns a borrowed article
 with beer; a family doctor, instead of being paid for his services, expects
 to be called to the family beer; and in the work party beer removes labour
 from the category of subservience to that of mutuality. With beer one
 thanks, but with money one pays.

181 None of the interests that we have considered are intensive, and none
 of the striving, whether for security, achievement, or recreation, is
 concentrated. The diverse ideals and achievements that are permitted
 in social arrangements enrich personality and encourage the qualities of
 balance and wisdom; and the insistence upon a reciprocity which is not
 motivated by distrust, conditions mutual helpfulness and suppresses
 aggressiveness and display. 'An important clue to Lovedu's *Weltanschauung*
 is their attitude to what may be considered to be ultimate power, the
 power through which the final goals of life and security can be attained.
 Such power is sought, not in privations, tortures, visions, and self-
 oblivion, but in normality, equanimity and maturity; it is derived, not
 from breaking the ordinary bounds of experience to escape to another
 world and from transcending the limits of the senses, but from manipu-
 lating mundane forces and from identification with nature. The Lovedu
 do not compel cosmic laws by the power of ecstatic states or trances;
 they bend these laws to their purposes by supplicating the queen and

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939) 1943

FX14 Lovedu FX14



482
291
415



574 ●
291

XV. BEER AS A SOCIAL STIMULANT

(a) BEER BEING CARRIED TO THE QURIN

(b) A BEER PARTY

[facing p. 288]

EILEEN JENSEN KRIGE

425 their right to their lands. It is usual for people to 'beg' fields also in areas other than that in which they are living, partly to take advantage of diverse climatic conditions, partly because of land shortage; but their right to these is not as strong as to fields in their home district. Land shortage has not yet reached serious proportions owing to the fact that since the 1920's the tribe has been buying up sparsely populated Crown lands to the north. Grazing and the right to collect wood, thatching grass, wild fruits and plants for economic use are free to all, though herd-boys jealously guard good pastures in their own areas to which they feel they have first right.

231 Livestock takes the form chiefly of cattle and goats; fowls, still forbidden at the Capital, were introduced by the Tsoonga; donkeys and pigs are a European innovation, the former being popular among Christians for use in ploughing and transport, the latter being kept largely by women for exchange purposes. Though of considerable economic importance cattle play little part in the diet of the people, being used mainly for ritual purposes and as bride-price. They move in a chain of marriage exchanges from one family to another, creating and maintaining social links and knitting together in preferred marriage the descendants of brothers and sisters. It was calculated in 1939 that bride-price accounted for 95 per cent of all transfers of cattle in the Lobedu tribe.¹ Cattle coming in as bride-price are not supposed to be used for any other purpose than marriage for, unlike the Zulu who kept large herds, constantly replenished in the old days by raids against neighbours, most Lobedu families do not possess cattle except for short periods of time.

424 Lobedu ideas of property and their attitude to its possession and accumulation are rather different from ours. The correct use of cattle in Lobedu eyes lies not in accumulation but in their investment in 'building a house', i.e., setting up a new social and economic unit of a wife and children. Surplus crops, similarly, are not accumulated but are generally consumed in a succession of after-harvest beer parties in honour of kin and affines which adds considerably to one's prestige. This, so often cited as evidence of wastefulness and lack of foresight is, in the absence of any really reliable termite- or pest-proof form of storage (which makes accumulation risky), a means of insur-

¹ Krige, J. D., 1939, p. 396.

LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

was related to all except homesteads 10, 11 and 12: a sister of 42/ the head of homestead 1 was married in No. 13; a son in No. 4⁵⁷² of this cluster had married a Porcupine woman in No. 5; they⁵⁸² had a distant mother's brother's son in No. 9 and they were⁵⁷¹ related in the same way to two wives in the Fig group.

The Porcupine brothers for their part had a sister married in homestead 4 (Crocodile) and a daughter-in-law from No. 9. They therefore had affinal bonds also with two wives in the Fig group, sisters of this daughter-in-law.

The Fig group had married women from No. 9 and therefore had links also with No. 9's cross-cousins in the Crocodile cluster and with No. 9's affines, the Porcupines.

The manner in which kin of various kinds co-operate with 42/ each other and with neighbours could be seen very clearly⁵⁹² when Enoch, head of homestead No. 9 had to meet a gift⁵⁸ exchange obligation involving the sending of beer to the head⁵⁷⁶ of a neighbouring district. The beer, made from mealies from⁵⁷³ Enoch's own fields was brewed by his mother and by his sister from homestead No. 8. When it was ready, a messenger was sent to notify (rapa) all their relatives (malala). Calabashes for carrying the beer were borrowed from the neighbourhood and early in the afternoon a collection of women and a few men foregathered in the courtyard of Enoch's mother. There were⁵⁹⁴ ten calabashes and one petrol tin of beer, six baskets of Kaffir-corn and three half-filled enamel basins of grain into which the calabashes of beer were put for carrying. The grain was contributed by kin—by the cross-cousin in homestead No. 1; by the husbands (badabala) of the two sisters in homesteads Nos. 6 and 8; by two father's sister's daughters living outside the area and by a sister of the 'wife' of his mother, also outside the area, all of whom were present for the occasion. Women from the whole neighbourhood turned out to carry the beer. After the eldest sister of Enoch had poured a little beer on the⁵⁷⁷ ground with a prayer for luck on the journey and had drawn a magic circle round the mouth of each calabash with a charm, the party set out with ululations of joy and much talking and noise. Kin of all kinds and neighbours all contributed to the⁵⁷⁵ success of the enterprise and all took part in the feasting at their destination where the beer was consumed and a beast slaughtered for their entertainment.